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Sen. Van Woerkom's bill that toughens penalties for harboring a fugitive goes to the governor

LANSING — Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom's effort to aid police in cracking down on people knowingly harboring a fugitive won final approval in the Legislature today and now heads to the governor.

Michigan State Police officials supported the legislation introduced by Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores, saying existing laws deal with those helping fleeing felons and people who have escaped legal custody. The senator's bill and companion legislation expands coverage to those who hide someone wanted for a misdemeanor, felony, or a criminal or civil bench warrant.

"Police should have the tools to get wanted criminals off the streets," Van Woerkom said. "Harboring a fugitive is already a crime, but unfortunately police and prosecutors aren't able to enforce that. My legislation corrects that and makes it easier for police to do their jobs."

Van Woerkom's legislation is Senate Bill 1147 and the related bill is SB 1146. Both passed today.

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